

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2491



Introduced by **Representative Roy M. Gonzales**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Philippine Constitution explicitly mandates that “The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all. (*Article II, Section 9*) Every funeral shall be in keeping with the social position of the deceased. (*Title X, Article 306 of the Civil Code*)

The undersigned representative lauds the cash aid grant by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) by offering a one-time cash payment in the amount of P 10,000 for burial and death assistance to eligible indigent families.² The amount can cover casket and funeral services, expenses associated with the wake, burial plot, or interment, and transportation fees for conveying the deceased’s remains. The noble intention is to assist in any way feasible, but the economic challenges faced by these indigent families are unfortunately insurmountable.

Funeral ceremonies can cost P10,000 for a budget funeral parlor, at least P15,000 to P250,000 for mid-range, and as much as P500,000 for high-end.¹ With the prevailing inflation, these rates can further increase to the detrimental financial burden of the families who grieve their lost loved one while seeking economic means to clear funeral and burial expenses.

This bill aims to institutionalize a social protection mechanism to provide financial relief to qualified beneficiaries in times of bereavement with the partnership of accredited funeral service providers and local government units

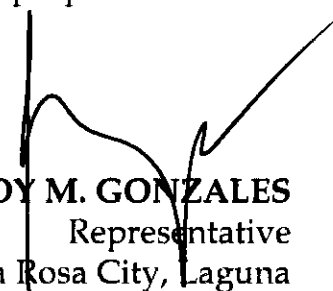
¹ <https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/03/12/2339799/pinoys-ill-prepared-high-cost-dying>

² <https://dswdcashassistance.ph/dswd-funeral-burial-assistance/>

(LGUs) and allocate the necessary funds to subsidize the cost of the program. The measure grants a fifty percent (50%) discount on funeral services to indigent families and free services to extremely poor families as certified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). By its passage, the State reaffirms its duty to extend an inclusive public service by providing support, not only in life, but also in honoring the dead with dignity.

Similar versions of this bill were filed in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th Congresses, and the present proponent acknowledges the hard work and wisdom of his predecessors.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this proposed measure is earnestly sought.



ROY M. GONZALES
Representative
Lone District of Santa Rosa City, Laguna

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

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Introduced by **Representative Roy M. Gonzales**

AN ACT
PROVIDING A FIFTY PERCENT (50%) DISCOUNT FROM FUNERAL
SERVICES TO INDIGENT FAMILIES AND FREE FUNERAL SERVICES TO
EXTREMELY POOR FAMILIES NATIONWIDE, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Libreng Libing Act of 2025.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will guarantee the independence and prosperity of the nation and free the people from poverty through efficient policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all. As part of fulfilling this, the State shall provide discounts on funeral services to indigent families and free funeral services to extremely poor families.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – The following terms as used in this Act shall mean the following:

- (a) “*Poor*” refers to families whose income falls below the poverty threshold as defined by the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDEV) and/ or who cannot afford in a sustained manner to provide their minimum basic needs of food, health, education, housing, or other essential amenities of life, as defined under Republic Act No. 8425,

otherwise known as the "Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act." The Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) established under Republic Act No. 11315 of the local government unit, with the supervision of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), shall be used to determine the degree of indigency of the family, whether indigent or extremely poor;

(b) "*Funeral Services*" refer to the preparation of funeral documents, embalming, viewing, interment or burial services, cremation and inurnment services, including the provision of a casket or urn, as the case may be, offered by mortuaries. The standard package of funeral services will cover:

1. Transfer of the deceased from the place of death to the mortuary for embalming and applying cosmetics within a 25-kilometer radius of the mortuary;
2. An ordinary plain casket and casket stand for viewing of the body or urn in case of cremation;
3. Two (2) to three (3) days of viewing outside the funeral chapels, such as the Barangay Hall or residence of the family;
4. Use of funeral viewing equipment, including lighting and arania;
5. Use of a funeral vehicle for interment within a 25-kilometer radius from the place of viewing to the place of burial; and
6. Unless for compelling reason, interment only on weekdays and on official time, Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., except on regular holidays.

SECTION 4. *Free Funeral Services for Extremely Poor Families.* - Free funeral services shall be provided for extremely poor families by accredited mortuaries anywhere in the country. The said free services shall be given to only one (1) family member per month per mortuary branch. *Provided, That* said funeral service does not exceed the cost of the mortuary's minimum funeral service package. *Provided, further, That* the grant of free funeral services under this Act is without prejudice to the right of the beneficiary to avail of upgraded funeral services given by the mortuary. The difference in cost shall be borne by the family of the deceased.

SECTION 5. *Discounted Funeral Services for Indigent Families.* – A fifty percent (50%) discount on funeral services shall be granted to indigent families by mortuaries anywhere in the country but would only be applicable to at-need funeral services only. *Provided,* That said funeral service does not exceed the cost of the mortuary's minimum funeral service package. The grant of a discount under this Act is without prejudice to the right of the beneficiary to avail of other financial assistance given by the government.

SECTION 6. *Requirements for Availing Free or Discounted Funeral Services.* – Before an indigent or extremely poor family can avail of the free or discounted funeral services, the following documents shall be submitted: (a) certificate of indigency issued by the barangay or the local social welfare office of the local government unit (LGU), stating whether the family is either indigent or extremely poor as defined under Section 3; *Provided, however,* That the certification shall not be a requirement before any member of the family of the deceased could avail of the services of the mortuary; (b) death certificate; and (c) funeral contract between the beneficiary-family, the accredited mortuary, and the authorized DSWD personnel.

SECTION 7. *Reimbursement.* – Mortuaries granting discounted or free services to indigent or extremely poor beneficiaries may seek reimbursement for the cost of the services from any regional office of the DSWD upon the approval of the Regional Director. The reimbursement will be based on the stipulations of the signed contract between the poor family, the mortuary, and the authorized DSWD personnel.

SECTION 8. *Lead Agency.* – The DSWD shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the provisions of this Act and shall engage the funeral services of mortuaries in the country.

SECTION 9. *Role of Local Government Units (LGUs).* – Notwithstanding the preceding section, the local government units are enjoined to fulfill their devolved function as mandated by Republic Act No. 856, otherwise known as the Sanitation Code, in providing assistance to indigent and extremely poor families in their respective areas at their own expense. Further, the LGUs will waive fees and charges, which will include burial or interment permits, cremation permits, transfer permits, disinterment permits, and the cost of death certificate.

SECTION 10. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the allocation in the General

Appropriations Act (GAA) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SECTION 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of DSWD shall, in coordination with the DILG, LGUs, and the Philippine Mortuary Association, promulgate and issue the rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 13. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, executive orders, issuances, and rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 14. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,